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ABSTRACT

Viewing the school principal as the most important component in reform is reasonable, but it raises the question of why empirical research on the superintendent's role in education reform is relatively thin. An overview of why this gap in research exists and ways in which the school superintendent influences school reform are discussed in this paper. It begins with the premise that systemic change within a school system generally rests in the superintendent's domain. The focus throughout the paper is on why there is such a noticeable absence of reflection upon, and empirical examination of, the chief education officer's role. The text explores the superintendent's role and how the original intent of the position--to manage increasingly complicated school districts--is currently challenged by arguments to decentralize authority and devolve responsibility. The conditions of the superintendency are outlined, with particular attention given to the difficulties inherent in the job and the need for these education leaders to deal with politics and the education of children, public disillusionment, incivility, and decentralization. The paper offers implications for future research and provides suggestions on which aspect of the superintendency should be investigated first. (RJM)

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The School District Superintendent: "Attention Must Be Paid"

by

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The School District Superintendent: "Attention Must Be Paid"

> *You pay him respect, or else you're not to come here...He's not the finest character that ever lived. But he's a human being, and a terrible thing is happening to him. So attention must be paid.... Attention, attention must be finally paid to such a person.* - Miller, A. Death of a Salesman

Purpose and Rational

Many who look to improve education advocate developing schools that "take care of themselves." Thus they look to school-level leadership to promote reform. This focus on operationalizing improvement at the school building site has produced precise and encompassing research identifying the nature and experiences needed by practicing and aspiring principals. While there is an inventory of skills and characteristics for these players, the role for superintendents remains generally vague. In fact, the literature on school reform "is largely silent regarding the role of the superintendent" (Schlechty, 1986, p. 18). This is reiterated by Murphy, 1990, as he notes that "remarkably little attention... [is] given either to superintendents specifically or to district level operations" (p. 237). Some (Tyack and Hansot, 1982; Wirt and Kirst, 1982) suggest that this omission is purposeful. They postulate that decades (1960-1980) in which superintendents, in general, exerted little or no leadership around a school improvement agenda warrant this exclusion. Thus, they are given an "authorizing and enabling" role in most of the prestigious commission reports. This decades-long concern about education, almost singularly focused on the school site and the principal may have significantly limited understanding the larger context, potentially truncating the scope of reform.

Viewing the school site and its principal as the most important component in reform is reasonable. It does not, however, satisfactorily explain the relative dearth of empirical research, and the lack of significant interest in superintendents and their preparation programs. Historically there has been sparse evidence about what superintendents actually do daily to meet the expectations for them elucidated in published listings of their duties. Cuban (1988) notes that "since 1920, little systematically collected evidence has been available about what superintendents did in and out of their offices... [and] between 1950 and the mid-1970's there were no comprehensive or systematic descriptions of what superintendents did on a daily or weekly basis" (p. 128). Superintendent watching since the mid 1970's has increased, although with some exceptions this has been limited to brief self-reports, time and motion, and shadow studies. In the 1990's, an era of "greying" and position abandonment by the chief executive officer of the educational enterprise, there is only the most modest of attention being paid (Chapman, 1997; Grogan, 1997; Johnson, 1995; Leithwood, 1995). The purpose of this paper is to explore reasons for this gap and suggest why and how it should be changed.

This paper begins with the premise that impacting the systemic conditions which give rise to quality education, rectifying the sometimes appalling circumstances of schooling for many children, rests within the superintendent's domain. It is our objective to glean from the extant research explanations for an absence of reflection upon and empirical examination of the chief education officer's role. We will suggest why the study of the superintendency must not remain, as Bridges suggests "the most important gap in research on educational administration" (quoted in Johnson, 1996, p. 20), and argue for increased attention to the preparation of superintendents and a related research agenda. We will make tentative suggestions as to what might constitute these efforts.

The Superintendent's Role

The school superintendency was borne of the school board's inability to "manage" burgeoning enrollment in city schools. Close on the heels of administrative responsibilities came the perceived need to be an instructional leader. More recently the role is defined by political mandates of community, state and federal stakeholders. Drawing these disparate images together Cuban (1988) conceived a tripartite role in which he named the dominant images which motivated superintendents behavior as that of "Administrative Chief," "Instructional Supervisor," and "Negotiator-Statesman." Balancing the often competing demands made by managerial imperatives, leading the organization forward, and political considerations totals up to "crosscutting, often incompatible, obligations" (Cuban, (1988) p. xviii.). The roles of "manager/administrative chief" and "teacher/instructional supervisor," the two roles which have dominated school administration for the last century and a half, may well draw upon different and sometimes conflictual modes of behavior and cognition. As Cuban asserts, the role of administrative chief demands efficiency and effectiveness through a compliance mode reliant upon technical expertise and the establishment of routines. The "craftsman/artist" or instructional side of the occupation calls for skills that require "independent judgment, autonomy, invention, imagination, and performance" (p. xviii). Integrated into both is a level of political behavior necessary for achieving specific ends. The political role, manifested in multiple arenas, involves the skills of negotiation, persuasion and the art of compromise. It is this role that is sometimes seen as the only one of the three which can not be delegated. It is this political role, which more and more characterizes "the work of superintendents [which] has increasingly become defined by political pressures, high public visibility, unstable school finances, and greater external controls exerted through court ruling, legislation, and sate department of education mandates" (Bredeson, 1995 p. 1).

Superintendents have been told that they need to be visionary, compelling and inspiring communicators who construct change strategies, postulate goals for moving the organization toward the preferred state and artfully negotiate the passage through the change process. Additionally, it is incumbent upon them to cultivate a web of relationships

with "outside" power brokers, all the while focusing on "keeping conflict at bay" (Blumberg, 1985, Cuban, 1988; Fullan, 1991; Hord, 1990; Johnson, 1996; Murphy & Hallinger, 1986; Paulu, 1988; Schlechty, 1990). If all of this suggests a "frazzled Clark Kent" (Cuban, 1988), caught in a "puzzling" (Crowson, 1987), "impossible," (Cunningham and McCloud, 1988) role, it is nonetheless "the district's superintendent of schools (who) will make or break any school based improvement process" (Hansen & Marburger, 1987, p 27).

Current pressures for school districts to decentralize authority and devolve responsibility have exacerbated the ongoing uncertainty as to the role of district-level personnel. One researcher has referenced this reinvention of roles and responsibilities as the cause of central office despair (Tewel, 1995). Suggestions that district administrators need to give up regulatory functions and control and provide support and guidance to schools is central to much of the current thinking concerning the role. Yet, many central administrators approach their new responsibilities with only a vague idea of how to meet these new role demands. Perhaps this is traceable to the reality that, despite major efforts to reform and restructure education, little attention has been paid to central office personnel in general, and to the role of the superintendent in particular, leaving a cloud of "ambiguity and ambivalence" (Fullan, quoted in Murphy, 1994) as to the chief education officer's role. It is our contention that too little is known and that too few appear interested in the superintendency.

Accounting for the Absence: The Conditions of the Superintendency

Documenting the research and ideas of the 1980's and 90's on the school superintendent has led us to examine, as a frame of analysis, current and future conceptions of the role of the school district leader. We then draw upon these in our discussion of the dearth of both research and professional preparation programs for superintendents. Specific conceptual and empirical literature bases examined include: power and authority, systems theory, role theory, and organizational structures. In addition, our review has touched on other literature relevant to school reform and leadership development, such as effective schools research, politics of education, the role of schools, interagency collaboration and leaders for the millennium. While explanations for the absence of attention to the role of the superintendent of schools are scant, the challenges of leadership for the school superintendent may well be suggestive of why attention is so intermittently paid.

We conjecture that the meager level of interest in the superintendency as a career and as a focus for research lies in the characteristics of the position itself. It is a less than compelling position. From its inception as a child of the board it grew in the shadow of the belief that the position (and the expense) was unnecessary. The emerging role raised "fierce battles... essentially connected to issues of power" (Blumberg, 1985, p.47). Board members were concerned with sharing decision making power; the public feared one man control; and

teachers and principals feared a loss of influence. The "Era of Nobody in Charge: 1960-1980" (Wirt and Kirst, 1982) diminished the role and completed what Callahan (1963) called an "American tragedy in education." A result, says Callahan, of the diminishment of the position from a "guardian of knowledge" to a business manager concerned with productivity and efficiency.

If the position initially raised concerns, current conceptions of this leadership role still engender ambiguity. At the beginning of the 20th century, and for some years thereafter, superintendents were considered educational experts, "philosopher-educators," and "managers of virtue." It is thus not surprising that the men who occupied the superintendent's chair were confident, "take-charge leaders who seem to know what schools need and stride into troubled systems ready to fix them" (Johnson, 1996, p.6). At the end of the century, a complex web of contexts, relationships and processes continually challenges the "superman" notion of the superintendency. These men, and a relatively small percentage of women, are the "target of criticism and at the center of controversy, forced to become the defender of policy and the implementor of state and federal mandates, and the orchestrator of diverse interests seeking to influence the schools" (Norton, Webb, Dlugosh, Sybouts, 1996, p. 21). Growing political involvement, an era of diminishing centralized authority, distance from the core technology of teaching and learning, severely limited tenure (tenure in the nation's 45 largest schools districts is only 2.5 years), and an ever evolving environment of incivility may explain to a significant degree why hopes for educational improvement are focused elsewhere than upon the CEO's office.

Politics and the education of children. Images of the superintendent as protector of community values, the steward of public resources, set atop a hierarchical administration, is an image from the past. In its place is the political player. Despite educators' persistent belief that "politics is beneath them...[they are] no longer free to choose whether to enter the political fray, superintendents must assess the political context of their district and decide how best to work within it....Superintendents can no longer rely primarily on the authority of their position, for politics pervades virtually every aspect of public education..." (Johnson, 1996, p.154). Involvement in local, state and federal politics is actively engaging more superintendents, claiming their time and inevitably taking them away from their schools and out of their districts. Nonetheless, marshaling powerful constituents, negotiating across interest boundaries for support, and managing often uncivil conflict remains unpalatable to many superintendents and the educational community they lead. Acceptance of overt political involvement is problematic for many educational professionals who routinely believe that politics will taint them - an attitude which may well impede forward movement on disparate educational fronts (Berg, 1996).

Still, "if the superintendent does not become one of the political players, he or she will be dominated by others, powerless and at the mercy of the political system" (Carter and Cunningham, 1997, p. 63). Despite this reality, many chief educational officers, finding

themselves in the discourse of politics, discover it is disconcerting, potentially engendering a conflict between what they envision as the purposes of educational leadership and the daily demands of the position.

> the notion that the school superintendency is, at its roots, a political venture and that effective exercise of the role requires keen political sensitivity combined with shrewd political skills is one that many people find distasteful... Education is for children, the thinking goes. It is too important and sacred a societal function to be mixed up in politics. (Blumberg, 1985, p. 45-46)

Evidence, however, suggests that the line from the superintendent's office to student performance is at best blurred (Musella and Leithwood, in Leithwood, 1995). Others have noted specifically that, given their "loosely coupled" organizations, superintendents are "least positioned to influence instruction" (Glickman and Pajak, 1989, p. 1). Additionally, demands removed from the classroom, including political agendas, persistently keep superintendents far from the immediacy of students and teachers.

In our observation, it is evident that few preparation programs appear to forthrightly acknowledge the political process or foster the involvement of prospective administrators in the political arena. The skills needed for mediating individual and group interests for the purpose of ensuring a productive educational program appear to fall generically under the rubric of building shared vision, public relations and colleagueship. The skills of political acuity, coalition building, political bargaining and negotiating in the face of overt and covert conflict, and the dexterous wielding of power seem relegated to private conversations and chance. The image of the Machiavellian politician may be getting in the way of empirical data collection and relevant preparatory work.

Public disillusionment. Another set of factors accounting for the lack of interest in the superintendency may be found in the public's routine challenge of conventional authority figures. The pendulum swinging away from centralized authority in education is not new. However, hardly a day currently passes in which the competition for who should decide both the routine and the challenging in schools is not debated. The reasons for public disillusionment with authority have been traced to the following:

1. People no longer had great confidence in any level of government.
2. Activists... elected to boards had less trust in professionals.
3. Parents were better educated and wanted part of the action. The father image of superintendents was no longer sufficient.
4. Teacher power increased, thereby reducing the power of school administrators.
5. The general decline in test scores tarnished the image of educational leaders.
6. Declining enrollment and an aging population presented different problems than those which most school administrators had been educated to solve. (Thomas, cited in Hord, 1990, pp. 32-33).

Superintendents who lead "systems that elude an operational goal orientation, inspection, and control" (Burlingame, quoted in Blumberg 1985, p. 51), are, as noted above, relatively powerless to impact teaching and learning. This has perhaps lead to a singularly intense disillusionment with educational authority which emanates from the top. The primary purpose of schooling, education of the young, can far more directly be connected to the activities of principals and teachers. The school site, has thus become the focus of the vast majority of studies concerning school restructuring and educational improvement. It has proven a more appealing venue to researchers given their preoccupation with cause-and-effect leadership assumptions.

The incivility. The "degradation" of educational leaders is relatively well documented in articles which refer to the "Despair at the Central Office" (Tewel, 1995), "The High Cost of Incivility" (Thomas, 1997), or "Requiem for the Superintendency" (Cody, 1993) to name a few. It has been called a "perilous profession" (Houston quoted in Carter and Cunningham, 1997), one from which "few have retired with the honor they deserved" (Cody, 1993, p. 33), and one in which women often find themselves disadvantaged and marginalized (Grogan, 1996). Increasingly, superintendents, male and female, are subject to a pattern of abuses proceeding from a generalized lack of respect, to persistently querulous constituents, and ultimately to divisive, acrimonious and abusive diatribes against both issues and the person of the superintendent. A "once powerful, exciting, and rewarding position" has lately earned the reputation of being a "nearly impossible job... [rife with] invasion of privacy and public abuse" (Murphy, 1991, p. 510).

That the superintendency is a position which attracts criticism is widely acknowledged. In many states, merely applying for a potential opening elicits public attention and on occasion defamation. Frequently, the superintendent's evaluation becomes a media event breeding defensiveness and even paranoia. Given the discordant voices, conflicting values, perpetually negative press, extraordinary hopes, limited funding and a desire to change while changing nothing, it is not extreme to think as has Paul Houston, that "school superintendents [often] bear... the same relationship to their communities as fire hydrants bear to dogs" (quoted in Carter and Cunningham, 1997, p.xi).

Decentralization. Over the last several decades, assaults on the concept of a professional educator have been coupled with demands for decentralized decision making processes. One result is the broadly accepted belief that educational decision making is the province of the public rather than a relatively small group of "elites." With conventional authority commonly challenged, the issue for superintendents is not whether to share decision making power but how. Devolution of authority to principals and ultimately to teachers and parents is an accepted practice across a broad swath of school districts. This "alteration in the roles of all educational stakeholders [has elucidated little] about the effects of restructuring on the roles of central office administrators" (Murphy, 1994, p. 350). Some, Murphy goes on to relate, go so far as to assert that the concept of school districts and school boards has

outlived its time. In the late 1990's the demise of either entity does not appear likely. Although the titular head of the organization is finding more and more authority being dispersed, accountability still remains primarily focused on district-level leadership. At its most extreme, the position of superintendent remains the one most easily terminated in response to perceived failures occurring anywhere within the system. This persistent vulnerability in an era of increasingly diminished power, may account for the relatively few candidates in search of superintendencies and the continuing lack of interest by researchers in a role of such brief tenure.

Implications for Future Research and Preparation

Based on our analysis of the factors impeding the investigation of the superintendency, we contend this leadership role need not be abolished, but transformed. We need to develop new conceptions of leadership at the district level. Following the notion advanced by Murphy (1994), we concur "that the roles and activities of district administrators should be restructured to better match transformational change efforts occurring at the local school level. . ., especially in the turbulent period characterizing the movement from an industrial to a post-industrial school system" (p. 357). While we are rethinking roles, uncertainties and ambiguities arise which must be acknowledged. Balkanization needs some counterbalancing as each school finds its own compass point. Devolving responsibility to school sites heightens the need for educational leaders positioned to see the relationships between myriad strands of the schools and the social systems in which they are embedded. Efficiency and equity concerns remain and so long as there appears to be no unitarian interest in **all** children, someone must be charged with the responsibility of looking after other people's children. To date, the best candidate for that role remains the superintendent of schools. Superintendents are in the unique position to be stewards of equity across all schools, advocates for youth and learning, conduits to policy makers, and educators of the entire school community.

As we mentioned earlier, several emerging trends underscore this transformation of the superintendency, which should shape our future research agenda and how we prepare and support our next generation of superintendents. In recent years the function of the central office has begun to change from monitoring and regulating the work of the school system to providing services "to assure that individual schools have what they need to be successful" (Carlson, 1989, p. 3). The new role for central office staff moves away from controlling and compliance, shifting to a role of providing curricular and instructional support and assuring the equitable allocation of resources across schools. Interestingly, this role shift comes at a time when many districts are downsizing their staffs and requiring more of individual schools.

Becoming more service oriented directly affects a second trend. Superintendents must become "mediators" capable of interacting with different elements of the social system to

ensure that appropriate services are provided to schools (Pitner and Ogawa, 1981). Mediation requires superintendents to take on the political role of "negotiator-statesmen" (Cuban, 1988), using their power to shape policies, marshal resources, build coalitions, and resolve conflict. Rather than viewing mediation and political behavior as corrupt and self-serving, Blase (1991) provides a more positive viewpoint:

> Micropolitics is about power and how people use it to influence others and to protect themselves. It is about conflict and how people compete with each other to get what they want. It is about cooperation and how people build support among themselves to achieve their ends. It is about what people in all social settings think about and have strong feelings about, but what is so often unspoken and not easily observed. (p. 7)

Therefore, political behavior is about using power, gaining influence, resolving conflict, and gaining cooperation when there is uncertainty about the correct choice or direction, skills which are critical as superintendents mediate and negotiate among and between different constituencies. Our call for superintendents to embrace, rather than reject, a political role is not new. For example, Blumberg (1985) conceives the superintendency as dealing with the distribution and use of power, Hord (1990) notes that the chief executive's role " has been significantly impacted by the emerging importance of politics and action-oriented interest groups" (p. 20), while Murphy (1991) describes superintendents as needing to become "coalition-builders" capable of building alliances with various groups, including governors, mayors, legislators, the business community, and community agencies.

These trends not only affect the future superintendent's role, but they also raise important issues worthy of research as well as influencing how we prepare and support aspiring leaders for this changing role. We first turn our attention to what the future might hold for research on the superintendency before examining implications for preparation programs.

Future inquiry. Although limited empirical research has been conducted on the superintendency (Johnson, 1996), the role transformation of the position suggests compelling issues for future inquiry. Clearly, understanding the evolving role of superintendents will require studies that clarify how they lead school systems in a turbulent economic, political, and social-cultural context. For instance, research might focus on the ways in which teaching and learning in schools is impacted as district-level leaders strive to become service providers, particularly in an era when district offices are downsizing their staffs. In addition, another promising line of inquiry is to replicate and expand recent studies examining how the changing context of school governance and central office roles affect superintendents' actions. By conducting a series of large-scale surveys and intensive case studies in different contexts, we would begin to learn how superintendents build community, redefine leadership for empowered schools, and assist schools in dealing with systemic change

(Murphy, 1994). Rather than only gathering superintendents' perceptions, these investigations should focus on perspectives held by other role groups, including students, teachers, parents, community agencies, and legislators.

Finally, other studies should deal with the political role of superintendents. If we are to learn how superintendents effectively use their power and influence to build coalitions, secure resources, and manage conflict, additional investigations examining this political role are essential. Therefore, short-term and longitudinal studies might address the following issues, some of which have been suggested by other scholars:

- How superintendents exercise their power and dominance in school systems as well as the challenges to their political power (Scribner, Reyes, and Fusarelli, 1995)
- Situations when superintendents have misused their power
- How race, gender, and social class impact power relationships (Marshall and Anderson, 1995; Shakeshaft, 1989)
- The influence of state and federal policies on local accountability (Scribner, Reyes, and Fusarelli, 1995)
- Strategies superintendents employ to negotiate with and influence school board members (Myers, 1992)
- Factors influencing the high turnover rates in the superintendency (Burlingame, 1977; Myers, 1992)

Future preparation and support. Disagreements abound as to whether present-day approaches to superintendent preparation ensure quality leadership in our school systems. On the one hand, some studies report contemporary superintendents believe their university preparation programs were quite helpful in preparing them for this leadership role (Henry and Achilles, 1997; Myers, 1992). One reason cited for these positive reactions is the quality of the relationships aspiring superintendents establish with professors in their program (Cunningham and Hentges, 1982). On the other hand, superintendents have been far less kind in judging their preparation programs, noting they were not adequately trained in skills deemed important for their success in leading school systems (Mutsch, 1997).

Despite some evidence that preparation programs are effective, the current landscape of superintendent preparation suggests significant changes are needed. For example, although there appears to be little consensus among educational administration faculty and accrediting agencies about the necessary skills, abilities, and experiences required for effective superintendents (Peterson and Finn, 1985), the curriculum of most preparation programs is similar all across the United States, typically focusing on "leadership, supervision, administration, school law, planning, politics, negotiation, finance, [and] budgeting" (Myers, 1992, p. 96). In addition, superintendents' career paths often do not coincide with their formal university preparation. Most educators

enter leadership preparation programs with little desire to eventually become superintendents and many beginning superintendents are not hired until long after completing their program of studies (Henry and Achilles, 1997). Compounding the problems of a stagnant curriculum and an unpredictable career path is the fact that:

> Preparation programs for school administrators are often fragmented, unfocused, and lacking a carefully sequenced curriculum. Moreover, they can easily extend over a period of years. The preparation process can be a hit-or-miss, piecemeal selection of education courses, institutes, and academies, rather than a planned, systematic program of professional studies. (Hoyle, 1989, p. 376)

Finally, a growing number of states are relaxing their certification or licensure requirements to expand the pool of qualified applicants for an ever-increasing number of superintendent vacancies. Consequently, individuals are being licensed even though they have non-traditional backgrounds and/or have not completed certain university coursework. For instance, New Hampshire recognizes administrative experience in place of university credit, Colorado does not require superintendents to have had any formal teaching or administrative experience, and several school districts have gained national attention by hiring former military leaders to head their schools systems (e.g., Seattle, Washington, Boulder, Colorado).

To prepare future generations of superintendents to deal responsibly with the educational, economic, social, and political complexities facing our communities and society, preparation programs must reconsider their program content, instructional processes, and delivery format. Given our belief that central offices become service providers and superintendents possess the political savvy of negotiator-statesmen, the curricular content of preparation programs should reflect these new priorities. Besides focusing on the managerial aspects of the job (e.g., fiscal, legal, technological, and personnel issues), preparation programs should allow aspiring superintendents to:

- Articulate and clarify their beliefs, values, and moral positions regarding schooling and leadership (Beck and Murphy, 1994; Johnson, 1996; Murphy 1991; Murphy, 1992). When leaders are clear about what they stand for, they can be more effective in communicating their ideas to various groups and in helping to resolve conflicts.
- Expand their perspectives about the history, purpose, and nature of schooling and leadership in our society (Johnson, 1996; Murphy, 1992; Schmuck, 1992). By examining issues from a variety of perspectives (e.g., social-cultural, economic, psychological), the intent is to prepare well informed, knowledgeable educators who possess "a deeply educative and pedagogic interest in the lives of children and young people" (Evans, 1991, p. 7).
- Hone their political knowledge and skills in order to mediate disputes with others (Murphy, 1991; Murphy, 1992); competently deal with collective

bargaining, policy development, and community relations (Schmuck, 1992), work with legislators and other politicians (Henry and Achilles, 1997), and negotiate effectively with school boards (Johnson, 1996). As we mentioned earlier, superintendents cannot afford to delegate the political aspects of their jobs. Equipping them with the knowledge and skills of how to be an ethical political leader is essential for leading school systems.

- Develop change facilitation skills (Hall and Hord, 1987; Henry and Achilles, 1997). Because individual schools and districts are constantly being asked to change and adapt, the astute superintendent will be able to anticipate reactions to these innovations and guide educators and community members through the change process.

Besides altering the content, equally important is redesigning the instructional processes and delivery systems utilized in preparation programs. Several recommendations are offered as faculty rethink how best to present information to aspiring superintendents, engage them in the learning process, and assess their learning. First, because most aspiring superintendents have extensive classroom and school-based leadership background, active, relevant, and "hands-on" learning activities can capitalize on these educational experiences. A growing number of critics are calling for the overhaul of administrator preparation programs, advocating active, learner-centered activities replace passive, lecture-based approaches (Henry and Achilles, 1997; Murphy, 1992). Examples of learner-centered activities include cooperative learning, in-basket exercises, simulations, role playing, and case studies. These learner-centered activities, along with reflective journals, field observations, and presentations of theory and research, are the major instructional components of the Institute for Executive Leadership, a new superintendent preparation program at Lewis and Clark College (Schmuck, 1992).

Second, to reduce isolation and the impact of "incivilities," and increase their professional networks, aspiring superintendents should engage in activities with other professional educators throughout the program. One way of encouraging professional interaction and learning is by allowing future superintendents to conduct field observations, internships, and practica away from campus as well as having practicing school leaders share their insights and experiences during on-campus class sessions (Schmuck, 1992). Rather than being placed in a single field site, program participants should be encouraged to visit and work in multiple settings, including rural and urban school systems, local and state-level governing bodies, and community agencies. By observing and working in a variety of educational, political, and community-based organizations, prospective leaders' perspectives and experiences will be broadened and their realities of how school systems can be effectively lead will be expanded. Another approach for encouraging collaborative interaction among program participants is to utilize student cohorts (Barnett and

Muse, 1993; Basom, Yerkes, Barnett, and Norris, 1996; Murphy, 1992; Schmuck, 1992). When cohort members develop rapport and trust, peer involvement and networking increases; professional isolation is reduced; and participants become creators of knowledge, rather than consumers of knowledge (Schmuck, 1992).

Finally, Mutsch (1997) found practicing superintendents still desire professional development, regardless of how long they have held their positions. This finding suggests ongoing support after completing a preparation program is necessary for superintendents to effectively deal with the demands and complexities of the job. In response to this need, a number of philanthropic foundations and professional associations have developed programs which attempt to provide on-the-job assistance to superintendents. Examples include Superintendents Prepared (co-founded by the Institute for Educational Leadership, the MacKenzie Group, and the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies), The American Association of School Administrator's National Superintendents Academy, and the Danforth Foundation's Forum for the American School Superintendent.

A number of university preparation programs have altered their content and pedagogy along the lines suggested here; however, they are paying little attention to the professional development needs of superintendents once they enter the profession (Henry and Achilles, 1997). Clearly, the opportunity exists for university faculty to create and deliver induction programs and collaborate with public and private organizations in providing continuing on-the-job support for the leaders of our school systems. By taking on these post-degree professional development responsibilities, faculty would exemplify Hoyle's (1989) professional-studies model of leadership training and development, one where faculty would be rewarded for their ability to produce quality leaders, rather than for their publishing record. To be sure, the current faculty reward structures, recruitment and retention procedures, and workload policies in most universities would need to be revised in order to fully embrace such a professional-studies model.

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